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17 NOV 1965

Dear Jim:

In response to your request of 23 August, we have re-examined the question of whether the Soviets are engaged in a manned lunar landing program competitive with the Apollo schedule. Our conclusion, which you will find in paragraph 12 of the attached memorandum, is that they probably are not, although we cannot rule out the possibility. Our estimate of the earliest possible date for a Soviet manned lunar landing attempt is mid-1969, but we believe a more probable date to be a few years later.

In arriving at this judgment, which is wholly in accord with NIE 11-1-65, "The Soviet Space Program," January 1965, we have closely examined all the new evidence -- technological, and economic and political as well -- which relates to the subject. We still, however, do not find that which would justify a conclusion other than the above.

I have recently convened a special panel of scientific and technical authorities to examine the available evidence which bears on this and their conclusions are in parallel with those of the Agency's memo.

I know I need not remind you of the great sensitivity of a document which bears the classification of this one.

Sincerely,

(signed) W. F. Raborn

W. F. Raborn

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Attachment

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CONCUR:

Honorable James E. Webb
Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D. C.

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